



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 7 June 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
7 JUNE 1968

1. Czechoslovakia

We have confirmation [] that Dubcek was hard pressed by the Soviets to make sure that his reform movement did not slip out of Communist control.

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The new Czech leaders [] decided that they could salvage most of their liberalization program but that they would have to meet a number of Soviet demands. As a result, they partially revved up again the party's opposition to the Catholic Church and to new non-Communist political groups.

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They also decided that it would be necessary as well to follow through soon on the promises contained in the action program. A way had to be found to make news media more responsive, but without reintroducing censorship.

The course of events since these decisions has pretty much followed the plan, except that pressures for speedier liberalization in the country apparently were stronger than the leadership anticipated. Some modifications have been made in that direction, but only enough to gain a respite. Clearly, Dubcek will have serious difficulty satisfying both the Soviets and his own people, particularly liberals who will be pressing for even more reforms to be put on the agenda of a special party congress in September.

2. Panama

Arias, at his request, had a cordial conversation with Ambassador Adair on Tuesday. In the course of stressing his wish for better relations with the US, Arias intimated that a request for budgetary support might become necessary.

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3. Philippines

The appropriation bill for the civic action group in Vietnam is still languishing, primarily for want of a hard push from Marcos. One Senate opposition figure, whose vote could break the deadlock when the special session convenes next month, says he will go along only if another does. The other, arguing that the opposition cannot be expected to lead the drive, apparently is waiting for Marcos to lay his domestic political prestige on the line for the bill.

4. Communist China

There is further evidence of the bad effect the Cultural Revolution is having on exports. Western traders at the recent Canton trade fair complained that Chinese export goods were in short supply and high priced. Exports to Japan in the first four months of this year were about 40 percent lower than in the previous four-month period.

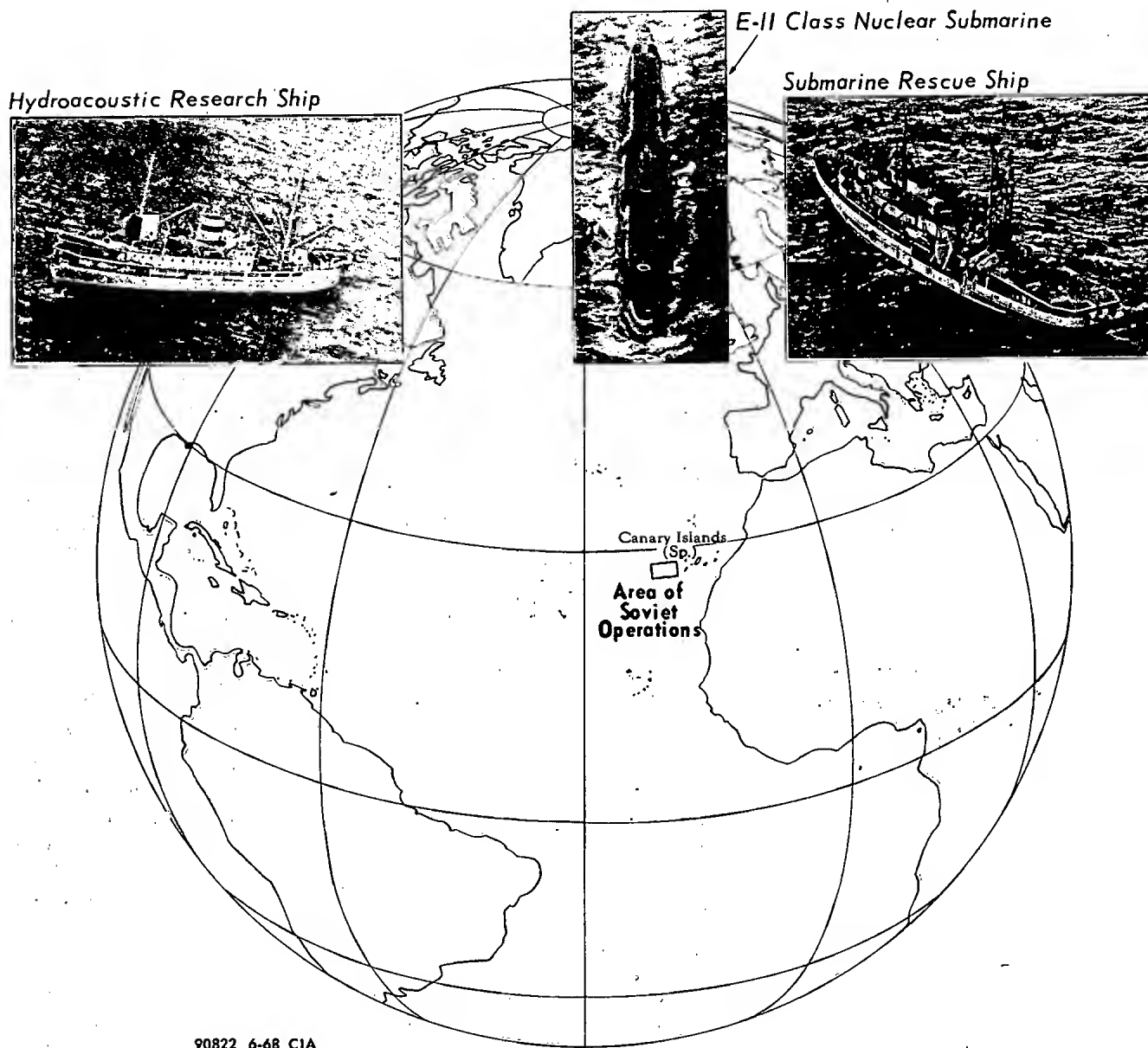
5. Middle East - Kennedy Assassination

In the coffee houses and the editorial pages of the sensational press, the Arabs are calling the Kennedy assassination a "Zionist plot." They see it as intended to sour Arab relations with the US. Responsible Arab newspapers and officials, however, soberly denounce the crime and stress that it will probably provoke strong anti-Arab sentiment in the US.

In Israel, one popular and strongly nationalistic paper has attempted to link the assassination to an Arab international conspiratorial group patterned on pre-Israel Zionist terrorist organizations. It points out that the assassin transferred Arab world political assassination to America. Another paper blames the act on an Arab incitement campaign.

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Soviet Ships Near the Canary Islands



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6. Soviet Union

The Soviets show a rather unusual interest in the Atlantic around the Canary Islands. They have sent expeditions to the area almost yearly since 1963--the latest one was there in the last half of May. This activity is definitely related to submarine operations; this year a nuclear-powered submarine worked with a group of research ships.

This part of the Atlantic is generally calm, has good conditions for sonar work, and is off the beaten path. Just what the Russians are up to is not certain. One good possibility is that they have in mind eventually setting up a mobile support base for submarine operations. The position would be a good staging point between home ports and the US coast.

7. Soviet Union

Satellite photography shows that the new space launch complex at Tyuratam is nearing the end of construction. This is the launch center for the Soviet programs to land a man on the moon and to place a large manned space station into orbit around the earth.

We do not, however, expect an attempt at a manned lunar landing before mid-1971, nor the orbiting of the space station before the mid-1970s.

8. Communist China - Burma

There are signs that Peking is trying to make up with Rangoon. Relations have been at a low ebb since last summer, when the Chinese Communist embassy in Rangoon sponsored Maoist "revolutionary" activity that led to anti-Chinese rioting.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

More Vietnamese to Paris: Hanoi continues to
dispatch more people to Paris. The latest group is
legal talent

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Hanoi said they were going to Paris
"for a job of brief duration with the North Vietnam-
ese delegation."

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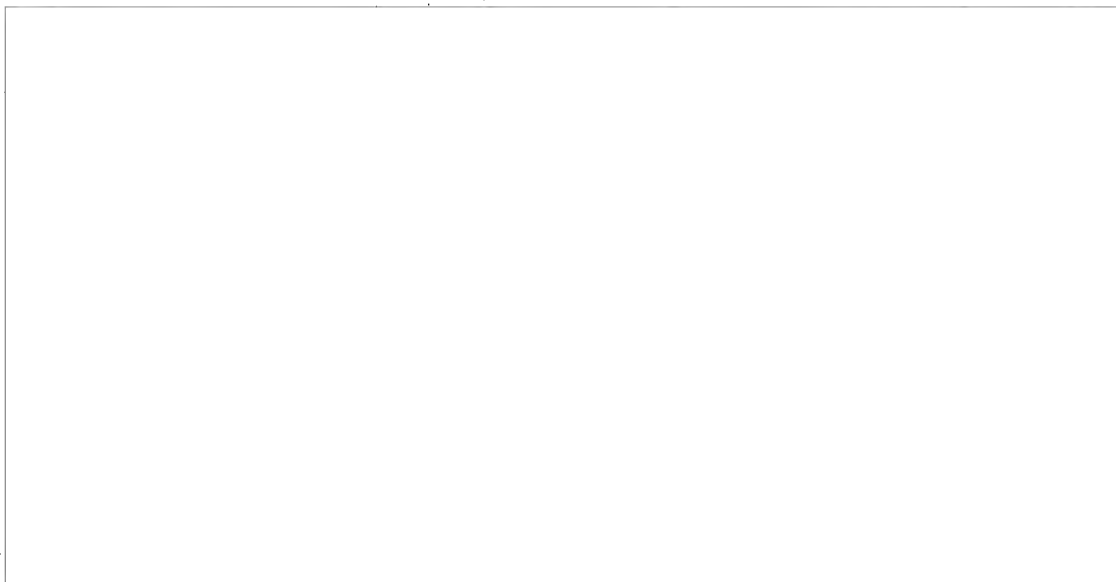
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Doumer Bridge: Permanent repairs to the Paul Doumer Bridge are nearly half completed. Photography of 23 and 27 May shows three of seven dropped bridge spans are in place and work completed on damaged or improvised piers. At the present rate of construction the remaining four spans could be in place by mid-June and the bridge open to rail traffic soon after. A large barge crane and steel truss bridge spans were first noted near the Doumer bridge in mid-May photography.

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The destruction of the Doumer bridge, although an impediment to traffic crossing the Red River, never halted the movement of supplies into Hanoi. There are 18 rail and highway by-passes to the Doumer bridge.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Paris Delegation on Senator Kennedy: Officially, the North Vietnamese in Paris have refrained from any comment on the death of Senator Robert Kennedy. The press spokesman for the delegation said yesterday that it was "the concern of the US and the American people." A Reuters correspondent in Paris, however,

apparently found a North Vietnamese who was willing to comment, but not to be identified. This unnamed person claimed that the North Vietnamese saw a "certain connection" between the shooting of President Kennedy in Dallas, his brother in Los Angeles, and Martin Luther King in Memphis.

* * *

Hanoi Radio on Senator Kennedy: Hanoi Radio yesterday commented on Senator Kennedy's death. In a broadcast to Southeast Asia in English, Hanoi said that "world public opinion is unanimous that with the assassination, US prestige in the world has further declined. Many foreign papers have pointed out that the assassination was part and parcel of the plot of US ruling circles to eliminate one another in their race for power."

Similar but briefer comments were made by Hanoi Radio in Vietnamese to South Vietnam, and in English to American troops in the South.

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